THE WOMEN'S INDUSTRIAL NEWS

ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL (Incorporated),
7, JOHN STREET, ADELPHI, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

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COUNCIL NOTES.

In Memoriam.

Mr. STEPHEN FOX.

The Council have to announce with regret the death of Mr. Stephen Fox, one of the oldest members of the Council. When in health, and until he retired to the country, his advice and help were always at the service of the Council, and his sympathy and active support were most valuable assets.

Finances.

In common with other societies of a like nature, the Council, during the third year of War, is suffering from the fact that many subscribers find themselves obliged to reduce their subscriptions, others to withdraw them altogether.

It is encouraging to find that the majority add, "for the present," in both cases. At the same time, however, owing to War conditions, the Council finds it necessary and desirable to undertake additional activities. More women are now engaged in Industry than ever before, and the services the Council is specially fitted to render are most urgently needed. Never have expenses been so high, and every addition to the sphere of activities adds to the cost of maintenance. The work is thus constantly hampered by want of Funds.

The Committee urge Members and Subscribers to help them to continue and maintain the work of the Council, by sending a special subscription and interesting new subscribers in the work.

New Offices.

The Executive Committee have taken new Offices, and will move into them during August, while the Office is closed. The new address will be: 6, York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C.2.

Additional expenditure will necessarily be incurred not only for the actual removal of furniture, but several items of equipment must be replaced.

The Committee will be very glad of contributions towards the Moving Fund, or other gifts :—

Wanted :—Two hearth rugs. Three pairs of dark casement curtains, for windows 6 ft. by 4 ft. Two pairs for the front room, and one for the back. Gas fire. The services of a carpenter, amateur or professional, either during the week of August 13th, or after September 1st, to fix curtain rods, shelves, brackets, etc.

It is hoped to have a Council Meeting in the New Offices early in the Autumn and a notice of the date will be issued in the October Number of the " News."

Post-War Unemployment of Women.

An exhaustive enquiry has been carried on by the Investigation Committee, at the suggestion of Miss Jeannette Franklin, into the preparation being made by Societies and Associations, etc., for the anticipated dismissal of the Woman War Worker on the approach of Peace.

A special Sub-Committee established to deal with this important problem has issued a memorandum containing some valuable recommendations. They found that the workers for whom the least preparation was being made, and who would probably be the most affected by general cessation of war work, were the temporary untrained clerks, in Government and other Offices.

The same Sub-Committee has undertaken the work of carrying out the recommendations of the Memorandum, and has established a Joint Committee with representatives of other Societies interested in the matter, to deal especially with the danger of the "Pocket-Money Worker." This Joint Committee has undertaken to organize a big general campaign against this economic danger and hopes to hold a large Conference of Representative Societies at an early date.

Industrial Lectures.

It has been found increasingly difficult to maintain the Lecture List during the War; many regular lecturers are engaged in special War work, and several of the Associations who apply for lectures are suffering from lack of workers.

It has been decided to inaugurate a special series of lectures for the Autumn and Winter, on Industrial Law, i.e., The provisions of the Factory Acts, Industrial Insurance, and Compensation, especially designed for Trade Union and other audiences of working women and girls.

Any Members who are interested in Working Girls' Clubs, Trade Unions, etc., are asked to make these lectures known, an

to notify the Secretary of the Council, who will arrange to send a lecturer.

Motherhood Enquiry.

The investigation is still being carried on, and the field is now being somewhat enlarged. The Investigation Committee hope to be able to publish at least a partial report, in either the October or the January "News." The work has been delayed owing to the illness of Miss Clementina Black during the winter and spring.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The last number of the "News" was greatly delayed in process of printing, and although it actually saw the light under the auspices of our new Secretary, it is not until this number that we have the pleasant opportunity of welcoming her acceptance of office. Mrs. Boyd Dawson has had several years of experience in inspection of workshops, and other years in the work of a Juvenile Advisory Committee. She has also served for several years on various Committees of the W.I.C.; was for a short time secretary and subsequently chairman of the Legal Committee, and vice-chairman when that Committee became amalgamated with the Investigation. She has also been a member of the Executive for seven years. We feel that Mrs. Boyd Dawson's experience and other qualifications, as well as her intimate knowledge of the main working of the W.I.C., are a happy augury for the future, and that the Council is very fortunate in having secured her undivided services. We hope her term of office will be marked by a renewal of activity on the Council's part and by happy and harmonious relations with our new Secretary.

Women's Co-operative Guild.

Memorandum on the National Care of Maternity.

This Memorandum is an important document, which sets forth that the present provision for the care of maternity is utterly inadequate for the health of either mother or child. It makes a variety of detailed recommendations for a Maternity Department of the Local Government Board (presently the Ministry of Health), Maternity Committees of County, County Borough, Town and Urban Councils, and Maternity Centres, giving ante-natal and post-natal advice and treatment to both mothers and infants. To this end the service of midwives will have to be strengthened, and in order to secure satisfactory advice and treatment every midwife should have a doctor easily available behind her, every general practitioner a specialist as a consultant behind him, and a suffici-

ency of hospital accommodation for certain cases should also be provided in connection with Maternity Centres.

The special feature of the Memorandum is the proposal that the existing system of Maternity Benefit under the Insurance Act should be done away with, and replaced by free medical care, treatment, and an allowance from the Public Health Authorities. The Memorandum argues with considerable force that the Insurance Act has failed to provide satisfactorily for the needs of married women. That Act is based on wage-earning, the majority of women are not wage-earners, and marriage introduces conditions which make women un-insurable, as has already appeared from the excess in sick benefit claims by this class of insured persons. The excess, at first set down to malingering, is, it is now recognised, due to various forms of ill-health suffered by women in connection with maternity, and also to the effects on them of bad conditions of work and bad housing. It is not desirable to cut down the claims of these women, for, in the interests of the race as well as in their own, it is highly desirable that they should obtain the means of medical care, rest, and treatment. But under the Insurance system there is an inevitable tendency to cut down claims and to institute irrelevant tests, as, for instance, making sick benefit conditional on the patient renouncing all household work, even of the lightest description.

The Memorandum therefore urges that in place of maternity insurance, a Public Health Maternity service should be instituted by the Public Health Authorities, linked up with the work already carried on by those Authorities for the purposes of Housing, Sanitation, Pure Food and Milk, all of which are within the province of the Local Government Board, and all of which are necessary adjuncts to an efficient maternity service. It would prove to be highly advantageous to have all these activities linked up with maternity work, and all under the Authority which already controls the Infants' Welfare Centres in many districts. A service of home helps could conveniently be combined with the other provisions. The allowance proposed is 10/- a week for six weeks (approximately two before and four after birth), and this, together with the services of midwife, doctor, etc., as already outlined, would be available for all women whose husbands' wages fall below the income-tax limit.

These proposals may perhaps to some appear drastic, but they certainly form a courageous and carefully thought-out scheme to meet very considerable evils. No one can have read the volume (issued two or three years ago by the W.C.G.) called "Maternity," or the Report of the Select Committee on Sickness Benefit Claims, without feeling that there is something wrong with social arrange-

ments that leave so many women at the time of this greatest weakness and greatest need with such inadequate attendance, care, and advice as most of them enjoy at present. To us the argument for transferring the maternity work of the Insurance Societies to the Public Health Authorities appears irresistible.

Powers of the Home Secretary.

It is perhaps not generally known that a short Act passed last year* gives considerable new powers to the Home Secretary in regard to conditions in Factories and Workshops. Under this Act the Home Secretary can require, in any factory or workshop where he deems it desirable, that the occupier shall make arrangements for the preparing or heating, and taking of meals; supply of drinking water; supply of protective clothing; ambulance and seats in workrooms; washing arrangements and cloak rooms. More than this, the Order made for a particular factory or workshop (or group of factories and workshops) may provide for the workers concerned being associated in the management of the arrangements specified above, in any case where a portion of the cost is contributed by workers, but no payment shall be required from them for any of these comforts, except for the provision of additional or special benefits such as could not reasonably be provided by the employer alone, and then only with the consent of a two-thirds majority of workers. In case of the employers disputing the reasonableness of an order given, the matter may be "referred" to a "referee" (we are not responsible for the draughtsman's style) and settled in accordance with rules made to meet the case.

It is obvious that this Act is of far-reaching importance, and that in cases where the women inspectors have for years been trying to persuade employers to grant a reasonable minimum of comfort and amenity in the working conditions, they now can appeal to the Secretary of State and, if he approves, the matter can be settled. It is also provided that orders may be made in respect of certain requirements if a specified number or proportion of workers make application. We think the recognition of workers as having a voice in such matters is a very important part of this Act.

The Joint Committee's Report on the "Position of Women after the War."

This carefully considered report, drawn up by representatives of the W.T.U.L., the W.L.L., the Women's Co-operative Guild, the National Federation of Women Workers, and the Railway

* 6 and 7 Geo. V. c. 31

Women's Guild (who form the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations), includes a brief review of the changes effected in the industrial position of women by the war, with a series of recommendations for legislative, administrative and other changes to be made on the declaration of peace. While recognising the improved wages and conditions and wider opportunity that have come to many industrial women through the scarcity of labour caused by war, the report emphasises the fact that the rise in women's wages has taken place chiefly in trades where the organisations concerned have been strong enough to secure it. In many other trades some small rise has been obtained, but as far as the evidence goes, "the bulk of the depressed women's industries have not obtained a rise in wages anything like equivalent to the increased cost of living, nor is there any evidence to lead us to believe that women engaged as substitutes for men have, unless in exceptional cases, obtained the men's full rate. The promise to munition workers generally of a fair minimum has, so far materialised precisely in proportion to the energy of the organisations concerned."

If this is true in the green tree when labour is scarce, what will happen in the dry? It is evident that the cessation of hostilities may usher in a period when conditions of employment will be extremely bad for labour, especially for women's labour, through the difficulties of demobilisation and the necessity of workers to obtain jobs, even though, as many hope, trade in certain industries, such as engineering, may experience a marked revival, perhaps even a "boom." The Joint Committee's Report emphasises the need for a re-organisation of unemployment insurance, non-contributory for workers earning less than a decent minimum; general enquiry beforehand as to the prospective demand for labour for private work after the war; reasonable notice of discharge in Government firms and controlled establishments; railway fares for return home to be paid, also four weeks' holiday to be granted with pay to workers in trades where the strain and fatigue of overtime has been excessive during the war.

The Committee also urges that an interdepartmental committee should be appointed, including labour representatives, medical women, and factory inspectors, to review the whole question of unhealthy employments and conditions injurious to health, to advise as to what changes, if any, are desirable in factory legislation, and to become a permanent advisory committee. The Joint Committee recommend that working hours should be reduced to 48 per week, fines and deductions should be abolished, the standard of sanitary conditions and the promotion of hygiene in factories should be raised and made much more definite, and the staff of

women inspectors largely increased. In regard to young persons, it is urged that the age of employment be raised to 16, with increased and improved educational facilities, and that the Certifying Factory Surgeon be replaced by the School Medical Officer.

We have not space to do full justice to this interesting report (which we hope our readers will procure for themselves)* but we must refer in conclusion to the recommendations in regard to Trade Unionism, which the report of course recognises as vital to the progress of the woman worker. The vast majority of wage-earning women still remain unorganised, and the problem of their organisation ought to be seriously tackled by the Trade Union Movement as a whole. But it is here recognised that even if men's unions were promptly opened to women, as we hope they will be, something more is necessary. Women are too apt to be left out of the councils of unions, and though this may be due to their own apathy, a special effort should be made to convert them from nominal members into active trade unionists. "Special provision should be made for the representation of women on the governing bodies of the unions, and there should be inside each Trade Union special machinery for dealing with the organisation of women in the trade and with their special needs and grievances. This might be done either by the formation of a Women's Council, whose decisions and work might be subject to the general Executive Council, or it might be done by a sub-committee of the Executive Council. Provision should also be made for the appointment of women organisers and officials wherever justified either by the extent or by the prospects of the membership." These recommendations are calculated to satisfy needs of the industrial women's movement which have been clearly evident to us when we have had the opportunity of visiting the industrial districts of the North-West and Midlands.

For the prevention of sweating and its disastrous effects on the trade union standard, it is proposed that the Trade Boards Act, improved and strengthened, should be extended to all trades employing women at rates insufficient for a healthy standard of life.

WELFARE WORK: Another View.

By M. Cecile Matheson.

The notes on Welfare Work in the April Number of the "Women's Industrial News" leave one wondering whether, after all, the friends and foes of what is familiarly and, perhaps, unfortunately termed "Welfare" are not much nearer accord than

* To be had from J. S. Middleton. 1, Victoria Street, S.W.1. Price 2d.

their public pronouncements would lead the rather bewildered public to suppose!

The great difficulty in the way of mutual understanding arises from the fact that in a very large number of factories the appointment of a 'lady superintendent,' to use another name, has come through pressure from without before there was conviction within. Many employers saw no necessity for the innovation and were exceedingly nervous of interference. Hence they were completely in the dark as to the kind of woman to appoint, and when suggestions were made to them by competent and disinterested authority, they felt there was less danger of dislocation if they engaged someone of whom they had private knowledge. Sometimes that someone was the right one, and all fears were soon proved groundless. More often, she was inexperienced in dealing with working girls, ignorant of industrial matters, and as much at sea as her employer or his staff as to her exact function and duties. The resultant confusion has obscured much good work that is being done in more fortunate places.

Let us turn for a moment to some of the points of agreement. Working-class organisations are insistent in their demands for better and wider education for the great mass of the people. The average educated woman who seeks to become a Welfare Worker considers her education as her best wealth and very often takes up the work because she wants to share her advantages with those less fortunately circumstanced.

The worker demands that her independence and personality receive recognition and therefore she is extremely sensitive to any intrusion in what she considers her private or non-working life.

The educated woman shares this sensitiveness, as she certainly shares the respect for individuality, but, in a sense, on this point her education handicaps her. She has learnt to consider individuality as independent of much that the less educated girl considers essential to its expression. Till she was 18, or so, the professional woman was very likely at a public school. Here she probably wore regular school uniform, jewellery was forbidden, the dressing of the hair was prescribed and shoes and stockings followed the lines of health and not of fashion. Unless she is experienced in social work she does not therefore at once realise that her girls will consider sartorial suggestions as interference, and in her anxiety for their health and comfort she gives advice that forms a fruitful subject of adverse comment at their subsequent meetings. This difficulty is not so small as it may appear, but it has only to be faced to be overcome. When Reason is invoked she works wonders, but explanation must be given with tact and discretion if it is to win confidence.

It is suggested that the Welfare Worker only wants to earn more money for the firm. It is true that it is part of such a woman's standard of honour to keep herself, within reason, physically efficient to perform her duties, and not to slack during working hours—again within reason. It takes the average girl some time to understand this point of view. She is, after all, in her school years and how many schoolgirls have other things to do when the teacher is absent, often out of sheer bravado! Possibly the Welfare Worker realises that good work and good business react to the benefit of all concerned, but if she is employed by a firm that strives to ignore the claims of the workpeople to a share in increased profits and amenities, she is, as a matter of fact, rarely slow to rebel against their attitude.

The general assertion that "Welfare pays" has a curious national characteristic behind it, in which employer and workman share. Both are extremely anxious to avoid any imputation of either giving or receiving charity, and certain men of enlightenment, having organised their businesses with some regard to the health and comfort of all concerned, began the payment argument as an incentive to their old-fashioned fellows, who are, unfortunately, still in the majority. It is only fair to remember that **some** sweating is due to ignorance, and to an ignorance that will persist unless definite measures are taken to counteract it. The employer is a man of business; he has no time to study the health, ailments, psychology and traditions of the countless girls whom he employs. Given that he wants to treat them fairly he really needs a woman to help him and to take the burden of understanding their needs and desires off him and his foremen, and to give the girls themselves a lead in their struggle towards maturity.

Probably the mothers of the girls will, in the long run, be the staunchest supporters of the innovation. However right the claim that the girls should manage their own affairs, they have not wholly succeeded in the past in doing so, and the mother who cares for her girl's standard in life must be doubly anxious to-day when so many girls are seeking work far from home. She will be glad that someone will support her daughter in her effort not to succumb to evil talk and foul insinuation, to the temptation to join in drinking parties or in pleasures that look harmless to the high-spirited girl and are full of peril. She will be glad to know that her girl works in a factory where a woman tries to check the contamination of vermin, to detect illness in its early symptoms, and to enforce a standard of decency and cleanliness that is in accord with the upbringing of her daughter.

Thousands of factories are free from the evils cited above, but they do exist to an appalling degree and the nice girls too often

suffer in silence even when they are in the majority. If they can once realise that the Welfare Worker is their ally in these matters, they and she together ought soon to evolve a better order of things, and every right thinking mother will wish them success.

It is idle to deny that a bad Welfare Worker can easily abuse her position.—So can a policeman, a councillor, a member of Parliament, a Trade Union secretary, a teacher, a parent. England owes much of her greatness to the fact that the majority of her people do not abuse their positions, and we have every right to expect that the Welfare Workers, drawn as they mainly are from the highest-minded among all classes of English women, will be true to the National tradition.

REVIEWS.

Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1916.

An inquisitive mind might perhaps muse over the question how the distribution of stationery among Government Departments is achieved. While the Ministry of Munitions is able to publish handsome and rather extravagantly got-up volumes, on thick paper and profusely illustrated, but not otherwise of any very great or permanent interest, the Factory Department has progressively reduced its annual report to its present attenuated proportions of 10 pages. Within these narrow limits some interesting facts are to be found. We learn that in heavy work, the "acquisition of men's rates of pay has had a peculiarly enheartening and stimulating effect" on the women. The supply of women for industrial work appears to be practically unlimited, and any local shortage is "mainly in women's own industries and then simply through persistence of low pre-war standards of wages and welfare."

The good effects of better food and improved protective clothing in enabling girls to vanquish the difficulties of hard or unaccustomed work are noted. Miss Anderson also notes as a "national gain . . . the new self-confidence engendered in women by . . . efficiently doing men's work at men's rates of pay. If this new valuation can be reflected on to their own special and often highly skilled and nationally indispensable occupations a renaissance may then be effected of far greater significance even than the immediate widening of women's opportunities, great as that is. Under-valuation there in the past has been the bane of efficiency and has meant a heavy loss to the nation."

On page 9 we have an interesting résumé of the results of a survey of conditions in controlled factories. These were grouped as A, B, and C, A denoting conditions satisfactory in regard to mess-rooms and cooking facilities, cloak rooms, washing arrange-

ments, seats, first-aid arrangements, supervision of women by women. 31 per cent. of the factories surveyed were classed as A; 49 per cent as B (conditions inferior); 20 per cent as C (conditions more distinctly bad). Factories B and C were noted as being mostly those in which the hours were excessive. It is satisfactory, however, to learn that energetic action has been taken by the Inspectorate in co-operation with the Director of Welfare, and a number of factories previously classed as B qualified in 1916 for A; "to a lesser extent this is true also of C."

A Rational Wages System. H. Atkinson. (G. Bell & Sons), 1s. net.

The author of this little book has had some experience with one of the few British firms who are practising the American efficiency methods known as Scientific Management. He has become a firm believer in these methods, as producing "high wages with a low labour cost." He therefore desires to set forth the advantages of the system to the worker, and to show that a reward for efficiency can be manipulated so as to be a real incentive to good work, and to be compatible with justice and fair dealing. He does not make it sufficiently clear that Scientific management is not pledged to adopt the system he describes, or indeed any hard and fast system of remuneration, though it does base its calculations of wages on very carefully detailed time study, which will affect vitally the system of remuneration. The "Reward System," which he claims to be a "Rational" wage system, is the one which has proved notably successful in his own experience; and he describes it in simple language, and advocates it warmly as producing the proper "co-operation between management and workers" which everyone desires.

In the third part of the book he describes very briefly, by way of comparison, the three systems used respectively by the three pioneers of Scientific Management in America,—Taylor, Gantt, and Emerson; but he does not indicate at all clearly their connections with the whole movement, nor point out that they have been much more widely used so far than the one he advocates. Also he puts with them the Rowan system, which is much older than Scientific Management and not based on the same essential ideals. This part of the book, with its rather difficult diagrams, is badly arranged and too slight for the subject. But the first and second sections of the book form a very useful introduction to a scheme of payment which has certainly proved a success in one or two British works. It must not be forgotten that it is a particular scheme only, and that Scientific Management is not merely, or primarily, a question of methods of remuneration.

It is very necessary for women workers and for women Trades Unionists to make themselves acquainted with these new schemes. For it is very likely that experiments in Great Britain on efficiency methods will be tried to a considerable extent on women workers. This has already happened in the United States. Some employers may indeed select women for the trial with the idea of avoiding friction with Trade Unions.

M.M.K.

HEALTH OF MUNITION WORKERS.

By Sophy Sanger.

The Health of Munition Workers Committee has issued an Interim Report on "Industrial Efficiency and Fatigue" (1917, Cd. 8511, price 1s. 3d.), which supplements the Memoranda already issued on this subject. Two of these, namely Memorandum No 7 on "Industrial Fatigue and its Causes" and Memorandum No. 12, containing Dr. Vernon's report on "Output in relation to Hours of Work," are reprinted entirely in the report, which contains in addition the results of further inquiries undertaken on behalf of the Committee into "The comparative Efficiencies of Day Work and Night Work," the "Causes and Conditions of Lost Time," and "Incentives to Work with special reference to Wages." Part II. of the Report consists of two medical studies; one dealing with the health and physical condition of male munition workers, and the other with the results of an inquiry into the health of women engaged in munition factories, carried out by Dr. Janet Campbell and Dr. Lilian Wilson.

Those convinced of the necessity for a reduction of working hours in the interests of the mental and moral welfare of the workers will search the Report eagerly in order to gain additional support for the reforms they desire. It may be easy to show, for instance, that excessive drinking and all the misery it entails is due in large measure to exhaustion and lack of opportunity for healthier pleasures, and instances may be produced of the improvement shown in this respect in the habits of men whose hours are substantially reduced in heavy trades (as has been shown to result from the adoption of the system of three eight-hour shifts instead of two twelve-hour shifts in continuous industries). It may be shown again, how excessive hours of labour militate against the organisation of working women and frustrate all their chances of education and self-improvement. But however much proof is adduced of advantages of this type accruing from shortened hours, the reformer is helpless in face of national and commercial interests, unless short hours can be shown likewise to

lead to a high standard of output. Advocates of substantially reduced hours of labour will not, however, find so much support in the Report as might have been expected. We must, indeed, confess to considerable disappointment in the scope of the results presented. It might almost be said that the Report is valuable for what it leaves unsaid—for its suggestions for future inquiries, rather than for the actual data presented. It might have been expected that, in the interests of the national defence, extensive and elaborate investigations and experiments would have been undertaken, not by a Committee whose chief concern is the health of munition workers, but by a Committee on Output. The conclusions and suggestions of the Committee are valuable as far as they go. But they are incomplete and tentative.

The Memorandum on Industrial Fatigue and its Causes and Dr. Vernon's report on Output in relation to Hours of Work* should be read in full by all interested in these questions. They have been published separately at the modest charge of 2d. each. They are full of interesting matter and hardly admit of summarisation. Only the most striking points can be mentioned here. One of these is the extraordinarily interesting conclusion that one cause for the deliberate reduction of output on the part of the workers may be found in the excessive hours of work imposed upon them. After describing the physiological effects and symptoms of fatigue, the Committee expresses the opinion that: "It is not surprising that where employers, following tradition rather than experiment, have disobeyed physiological law in the supposed interests of gain—and for a century this has been almost universal—the workers have themselves fallen very commonly into a tradition of working below their best during their spells of labour. In so far as hours of work in excess of those suitable for maximal efficiency have been imposed during the last two or three generations of modern industry upon the workers, a tradition of slowed labour must necessarily have arisen, probably in large part automatically, as a kind of physiological self-protection. Without some conscious or unconscious slackening of effort indeed during working hours of improper length in the past, the output might have been even more unfavourable than we know it to have been for the hours of work consumed. . . . . Under wrong conditions of work, with excessive overtime, it is to be expected indeed that some deliberate 'slacking' of the workers might actually give an improvement of output over a period of some length by sparing wasteful fatigue, just as the 'nursing' of a boat-crew over part of a long course may improve their performance. It cannot in such circumstances be

* Memoranda Nos. 7 and 12, respectively, of the Health of Munition Workers Committee: Cd. 8213, and 8362.

said that a workman so restraining himself, consciously or unconsciously, is doing more to damage the output on the whole than the employer who has arranged overlong hours of work on the baseless assumption that long hours mean high output." This remarkable conclusion is borne out incidentally by a paragraph in the medical report on the health of women in munition factories, in which we read that many of the women in one factory investigated "apart from actual illness, take a day or a night off for a rest when they are feeling tired or run down. Some make a practice of taking a day off once a week or once a fortnight, and maintain that they work better in consequence." Again in another factory the workers seem to have been in the habit of taking an odd day or part of a day occasionally when feeling 'tired out.' Here then we have instances of the sound instinct of the workers frustrating the evil effects of unscientific arrangements tending to reduce output as well as injure health. May we not deduce from them that a remarkable identity exists in the interests of the workers and the interests of output? It is the timidity of the reductions of hours, the effect of which was observed by Dr. Vernon, that makes one ready to despair of any really far-seeing action being taken, either now in munition works or after the war by legislation, imposing sense on those manufacturers who remain too blind to see where their own interests lie. The data given us in Dr. Vernon's report are not enough. But this is an "Interim" Report and we may hope for more.

In an earlier Memorandum (No. 5, on Hours of Work, Cd. 8186) the Committee had expressed the general opinion that women workers should not work more than 60 hours a week. It was Dr. Vernon's task to ascertain by direct investigations whether this rule should be of general application, or whether in the interests of output (which the Committee maintain will in the long run be a measure of the workers' health and efficiency) any differentiation should be made between different kinds of work. The first set of figures given in the Report were obtained from an observation of the output of 100 women engaged in turning aluminium fuse bodies—an operation which requires "close attention throughout and some delicacy of manipulation." The hourly rate of output for six weeks before Christmas, 1916, when an average of 68.2 hours a week were worked, is taken as 100; the effect of the Christmas holiday was to bring about an hourly output of 111 during January; a two-weeks' reduction of hours to an average of 61.6 a week which followed had no immediate effect upon the rate of output; then came another fortnight of short-time due to shortage of material; in the following eight weeks, during which the hours were reduced to an average just under 60 a week, the

hourly output rose to 123, so that the total output per week was increased by 8 per cent. above the pre-Christmas period. Thus over the short period of the inquiry we find a reduction of about 8 hours a week resulting in an absolute increase of 8 per cent. in the weekly output. From this Dr. Vernon concludes that "it is probable" that 60 hours a week were still too many to produce the highest output, and he suggests that the output could be maintained if hours were reduced to 56 or less. In a second inquiry relating to work of an easier nature and requiring little attention on the part of the operative, Dr. Vernon concludes from observing similar short periods before and after Christmas that the hours of greatest total output were probably 62 a week. All this is of great interest, but it is tantalising in its incompleteness. It confirms, if further confirmation was needed, the fact that overtime beyond the ordinary Factory Act week is inexpedient in the interests of output. But it merely stimulates our desire to know what would happen if these hours—which (especially when travelling to and from work is considered) are still too long for the real well-being of the workers—were to be still further reduced to, say, 48 a week over a long period. Some of the well-known experiments of past years in reducing hours in men's trades make it not unreasonable to anticipate that, especially in work requiring care and attention, very remarkable results might be procured from a bold experiment of drastically reduced hours. Are there no women's occupations in munition works in which an 8 hour day will produce absolutely as much as a 10 hour day? The inquiry does not appear to have reached so far.

The Report on the Comparative Efficiencies of day and night work is not of the same permanent interest, if the Committee's view that night work is only a regrettable necessity during the national emergency, is endorsed in practice when the war is over. The inquiries made into this subject were only intended to cover what is regarded as a purely temporary state of affairs. The evils of continuing night work for a long spell on end are confirmed by the inquiry, but when the shifts alternate every week, only a very slight difference in the amount and standard of the outputs of the day and night shifts was observed. This is surprising in one sense. On the face of it, the continual re-adaptation of bodily functions necessitated by frequent changes from day to night work and vice-versa, might be expected to produce bad effects upon health and efficiency. The inquiry, however, seems to indicate (although this point is not emphasised in the report) that the fact of changing from the day to the night shift causes some sort of artificial stimulus, the effect of which wears off if night work is continued another week. For instance, in a case where the shifts

alternated every fortnight instead of every week, the output fell off in the second week of the night shift. This leads to the question of whether the first few nights of loss of proper sleep (and it seems clear that the majority of working women, and especially married women, do not have proper sleep in the day time) has an effect similar to that shown by Miss E. M. Smith's experiments, in which she found that efficiency in performing a certain mechanical operation increased enormously after sleepless nights, but that this nervous "spurt" was followed a few days later by a complete collapse of efficiency. If this analogy holds good in any degree, it would seem likely that, in the long run, the continual operation of an artificial stimulus of this kind must have a deleterious effect upon health and efficiency. Long-period effects are, however, not the concern of the Committee, and their inquiries do not show that night work every other week produces any such serious and immediate effects upon health as would result in an absolute lack of workers to fill the munition factories. The question of the wastage of labour through ill-health has not really been investigated and it is to be hoped that the Committee are giving attention to this question. The health of the workers actually engaged in munition work does not appear from the medical report to be so bad as might be expected. But there is no information available showing whether or not ill-health is the cause of the continual shifting of the workers which seems to be going on. The medical investigators take care to point out that the fairly satisfactory reports presented on the health of the workers examined at the works "are no criterion of what effect may be produced upon those —and their number is not inconsiderable—who for various reasons give up industrial employment after a short trial." In one factory out of 210 workers examined, there were only 116, i.e. not much more than half, remaining in the works on a second examination being undertaken six months later. If any large proportion of these girls left because they were "tired out," if not actually ill, here is national wastage indeed!

In other respects the medical report is deeply depressing, not because it reveals serious ill-health amongst those actually employed at the time of the inquiry, but because it exposes incidentally the gross stupidity of those at the head of affairs and in charge of factories. We read of girls not being allowed to sit down even when not actually engaged at their machines, or not provided with seats even where their work could be equally well performed in a sitting position; of women working 77 hours a week; of only three basins with cold water, without soap or towels, provided for 300 women and girls in dirty operations, 18 of whom handle mercury; of spells of 6 or 7 hours without food, resulting from a combination

of the legal 5 hour spell of work and long journeys to and from work. Possibly many of the actual defects mentioned have been remedied in the particular factories investigated. But we dare not hope that similar aids to inefficiency and ill-health are even now, after three years of war, eliminated from these works under Government control. The Committee itself mentions the surprising ignorance of the problems of output, hours, lost time and sickness, shown by both employers and workers called to give evidence. Hardly any exact data could be produced by these witnesses, so that the Committee was struck by the "complete absence of all systematic effort . . . to collect exact data which might prove of permanent value in the solution of industrial problems." If employers and workers alike had been more ready in the past to make a really scientific study of all these questions, very different results might have been obtained from our hastily developed munition works. The Reconstruction Committee should note the Committee's recommendation that a permanent organisation should be established "for the collection of scientific data upon which alone can be based the right solution of many industrial problems intimately connected with the future prosperity and progress of the nation."

A closely allied question, and one on which further information is likewise greatly needed, is that of "lost time." Clearly whatever be the cause of lost time, whether sickness or slackness, a much higher standard of regularity can be enforced with reason and with success where the normal hours of work are short. Reference has already been made to one cause of irregular attendance at work, namely the workers' own instinct that, without occasional days off, the work would be too great a strain. This point receives emphasis only incidentally in the medical report. In a separate report on the causes and conditions of lost time, Prof. Loveday sets out material specially collected bearing upon this question. One great obstacle in the way of an exact determination of the extent to which ill-health is responsible for lost time, is found in the absence of reliable medical certificates. The advantages of more reliable and adequate certificates are obvious. They would assist intelligent employers in organising their works on a scientific basis, and enable them to distinguish sickness as a factor of lost time with a view to its prevention, as well as furnishing data for the study of industrial diseases. But no amount of medical certificates of the highest degree of reliability would help in estimating the number of cases where illness has been warded off by the prudence of the worker in taking a rest betimes. Prof. Loveday is careful to point out that there must be a large element of conjecture in all general conclusions as to the causes of lost time.

Indeed, with the present lack of really reliable data, he seems to feel that general statements made by experienced persons are a more trustworthy indication of the real state of affairs than any attempt at exact statistics. His final conclusion is that "sickness records which suggest that even the best-managed factories are health-resorts are probably untrustworthy. Nearly all records understate and most records understate greatly the proportion of lost time due to sickness and other unavoidable causes." He points out, in addition, that it is imperative to improve the form of medical certificates and to increase the confidence of employers in them if more satisfactory records are to be procured.

The Memorandum on "Incentives to work with special reference to Wages" is not, as might appear at first sight, in reality far removed from the question of health, since (as Sir George Newman suggests in his general remarks with which the Report opens) "the records of the wages earned under a well-planned system of piece rates should afford some index of the health and efficiency of the workers." Good wages regularly earned are certainly the best possible indication of satisfactory conditions of work and life. On the other hand, the best imaginable method of remuneration will fail as an incentive to a high rate of output in the absence of "a healthy environment in the factory and the home," which the Committee rightly assert to be the "primary necessity" of good work. The object of a good system of payment is to encourage the worker, within reasonable limits, to resist the on-coming of fatigue. Its object is to make the worker keen to make an extra effort after the first freshness has worn off. It is consequently remarkable (as another instance of the amazing lack of common sense among those in authority) that the Committee should find it necessary to point out that "a wage scheme, the operation of which cannot be easily understood by the wage-earners, or, if understood, appears to them inequitable, fails as an incentive," and, moreover, that badly adjusted methods of remuneration may lead positively to limitation of output. Another effect of long hours in checking output comes out incidentally in the conclusions under this head, namely that working girls must have leisure to spend the extra wages earned, or the incentive to extra effort will tend to fail. The Committee also points out that keen workers, new to industrial life, may need to be protected from their own eagerness, and that, in consequence, too strong an incentive to effort may have bad effects in such cases. A useful appendix to the memorandum on wages contains a description of some of the prevailing systems of wage payment.

SOPHY SANGER.

which we stand, urge the Government to introduce such a Bill without delay, provided that it contains, as an integral part, provisions, for the enfranchisement of women."

THE AIMS OF THE WELFARE SECTION.

The Welfare of Munition Workers Section, appointed by the Minister of Munitions in the autumn, 1915, outlines its aims in the above memorandum. The principal object is "to raise the well-being of the workers to as high a point as possible in all factories engaged in the manufacturing of munitions of war," and includes such various heads as work-rooms, food, hours of work, wages, workshop amenities, health precautions, workshop behaviour and personal consideration, recreation, hostels and transit facilities, lodgings and morals. The help in need of the welfare officer cannot, perhaps, be too far extended during the war in order to meet the predicament of scores of thousands of inexperienced women and young people drawn into mush-room munition factories from every kind of home and employment, working day and night (until the limit of human endurance perhaps), strangers to the town or country-side. To the efforts of the welfare officer the workers owe, indeed, not a little of the improved conditions and comfort enjoyed in many national and other model munition factories. But if the intention of the Welfare Section is to define a permanent institution and not only an emergency measure, the terms of the memorandum become open to grave criticism.

The indiscriminate medley of duties included as "welfare supervision" in the memorandum, and devolved in the individual establishment on a single officer responsible only to the employers, offers in itself obvious objections. "Health precautions" are defined in the memorandum as "the reduction to the absolute minimum of danger to life and health from unprotected machinery and from the handling of explosive or poisonous substances." But this responsibility rests already with the Home Office, and will not be delegated to a less authority; while the right remedy for defects lies in a larger staff of women factory inspectors and medical officers, and not in the appointment of an unofficial and inexpert welfare supervisor. The interference of an irresponsible third party in matters of wages and hours of work will not be tolerated either by the trade unions, or by the private employer except in so far as the latter sees in the welfare officer his own appointed agent; and "welfare supervision" becomes only a name for "scientific management." No servant can serve two masters. Nor will working-men or women submit with better grace than the employer himself, unless to their own judgment, such questions as the amount of income "sufficient to provide for physical efficiency and leave a margin for reasonable recreation," the length of working day which leaves "reasonable opportunities for rest and recreation," or the kind of recreation suitable "outside working hours" for workers employed "under strain or on monotonous work." The standard of behaviour proper in the workshop so as not "to offend a worker coming from a respectable home," the degree of personal consideration due from "those in authority" to those under orders, the conditions "making for comfort and happiness" in the hostel or lodging, the means of protection against extortionate landladies or "disreputable company," the discussion of these personal matters belong, again, to the workers themselves or their own elected representatives. But the terms of the memorandum outline clearly an emergency measure and not a permanent institution.

In Memoriam.

Mrs. AMIE HICKS.

The Council, like other Societies that have more than twenty years of existence behind them, is gradually losing its elder members. Mrs. Amie Hicks, who has passed away after a long and painful illness of many months most patiently borne, was an original member not only of the Council but of the Council's parent Association, formed immediately after the Dock Strike, with the object of establishing trade unions among women and girl workers in the East End. Of one of the Unions thus formed—that of the ropemakers—Mrs. Hicks was, for a number of years, the Secretary, and the success of the strike for better conditions carried through by that Union was largely due to her guidance and to the implicit confidence with which the members justly regarded her. When, after some years of activity, a change and widening of the Association's work was resolved upon, it was Mrs. Hick's eldest daughter who drew up the scheme of the Women's Industrial Council—a scheme at once so definite and so elastic that it has remained unaltered in its essential lines to the present time.. Miss Frances Hicks (now Mrs. James) was thus the founder, as well as the first Secretary of the Council.

Mrs. Hicks was, during the earlier years, a valued member of more than one of the Committees, and the precise place which she filled has never been exactly filled by any one since. Her wide general knowledge of industrial life, her warm personal note of sympathy for the particular case, and the passionate sense of justice that glowed through her always deliberate speech, made up a well-marked individuality combining in a delightful way the qualities of experience and of youthfulness. By the reckoning of years she was often the eldest person present, but her spirit constantly showed itself the freshest and the most ardent. This eager, youthful spirit made it difficult for her to bear the inactivity to which in her later years her health compelled her, and it may truly be said of her that she died young though well on the way towards eighty.

WELFARE WORK.

Welfare work began, modestly, with the appointment by a benevolent employer, here and there, of a secretary, whose duty was to promote the welfare of his employees. Health, comfort, physical, educational and moral development, the offering of intelligent recreations, the beneficial adjustment of industrial conditions—these were the aims pursued. By and by it began to appear that as employees became more healthy, more comfortable, better taught, better amused and considerately managed, their output of work increased, so that the firms which had been acting from sheer kindness had incidentally made profits for themselves.

This agreeable denoûment—so like the happy ending of a moral story-book—was accepted as a matter for congratulation all round and as a useful text from which to preach to employers who had not hitherto spent money upon the salaries of welfare workers. Welfare secretaries increased in number, the plan became fashionable; and a Government that found itself responsible for hundreds of thousands of munition workers and somewhat troubled in conscience by a suspicion that very many of them were being seriously overworked, began by taking power to require provision for welfare

work in munition factories, and went on to clothe the Home Secretary with authority to require it, by administrative order, in any other factory or workshop.

Thus the welfare worker becomes an integral part of this country's industrial machinery, and the course of her (or his) future development a matter of very great importance to working people. Now, welfare work is a two-edged weapon. It may provide workers with the best, ablest and most inspiring friends. It may provide, and sometimes has provided, a bad employer with a slave-driver incomparably more efficient than the most bullying foreman in the world. And, as at present arranged, the handle of the weapon is in the hands of the employer. He it is who pays the salary; and, a good welfare secretary in the pay of a "driving" employer is in much the same position as a Medical Officer of Health serving under a Council made up of "Jerry-builders" and owners of insanitary property—except, indeed, that the secretary has not behind her the support of any such body as the Local Government Board. Of course, not all employers are, in fact, drivers, any more than all Municipal Councillors are persons seeking evil ends of their own. But as things stand, welfare workers are likely to be instruments of good to workers whose conditions are already above the average; while, where conditions are below the average—that is to say, where employers care nothing for the comfort or prosperity of their employees—it will not be humanly possible for any welfare worker to remain, in the long run, anything other than an additional instrument of oppression.

It is quite true that the better employer will reap a larger profit than the bad one, but experience shows that, to a certain proportion of employers, it is useless to preach that truth. The grasping person is incapable of behaving generously, even in the hope of an ample return, because he is incapable of really believing that liberality can pay. He will nibble minutes from dinner-hours, keep workers waiting idle, when they might as well be at home, reduce wages and demand overtime, although it has been demonstrated, again and again, that such measures actually decrease the output. That kind of person will not pay a comparatively high salary to a welfare worker unless he can reckon up every day a little immediate profit in extra minutes nibbled, extra heating saved, silence more strictly enforced, and workers harder driven.

In short, there are two points of view: one which sets first the increase of output, and one which sets first the benefit of the workers. To the interests of working people it is vital that the latter should be that adopted by the makers and administrators of industrial laws. Unfortunately, no sort of definite policy has been declared and the indications—such of them as there are—are by no means encouraging. Take, for example, Mr. Lloyd George's preface to Miss Proud's book about welfare work:

> "If a maximum output was to be reached—still more if it was to be maintained for a protracted period—it was all-important that the health and well-being of the workers should be carefully safeguarded. . . . . In a war of workshops the women of Britain were needed to save women; it was for Britain to protect them."

Mr. George's attitude is: "In order to secure output, look after the workers." It is the attitude, principally, of the employer considering his own interest. But the proper attitude for a Statesman is to regard workers and employers alike as members of the nation—live persons, not means to an end, in short, as citizens.

This habit of regarding certain sets of fellow-citizens as people different

from themselves and possessing fewer claims, lies at the root of nearly all the errors made by our rulers since the war began; and it is at the root of the idea that employers, as such, may be left to administer provisions for the welfare of their employees.

What is really needed is a frank recognition that people at work in any factory, shop, office or workroom have the right to a voice in deciding the conditions in which that work shall be carried on. Amid these conditions the larger part of many lives is spent; the comfort or discomfort of them affects health and happiness at least as much as do any conditions of private housing. Representation upon a board of internal management should be secured to the workers by law in every work-place employing more than twenty persons. Below that number the individual value and influence of each employee has a weight of its own. When once the principle of such representation is established, the welfare secretary will become responsible to the employees as well as to the employer. But the establishment of a principle is but a first step; it is necessary that there should be an advance from theory to practice, and in this matter that advance can never be made until some real independence has been secured for those workers who represent their fellows. How can a woman depending for her livelihood upon the will of a despotic employer demand from that employer the removal of grievances which he does not wish to remove? Clearly, one needs behind her the support of combined fellow-workers—in other words, of a trade union. A trade union, as such, is not well qualified to regulate conditions that must necessarily vary from work-place to work-place; but it is well qualified to uphold and defend the right of workers in each factory to a voice in the regulation of those conditions. Recognising all these facts, the Women's Industrial Council, at its Annual Meeting, passed the following resolution:—

> "That it is desirable that in work-places where 20 or more workers are employed, the workers should have a legal right to representation in the management of the internal conditions of the factory and that at least half of these represenatives should be appointed by the Trade Union or Unions concerned."

A PROMISE AND ITS FULFILMENT.

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"The pledge which I gave with respect to women's wages has been kept. If it has not been kept, I ask why the cases in which it was not kept were not brought to my notice. Wherever they were brought to my notice, they were set right. . . . To talk as if women were only getting 20s. per week! Women have never earned so much, and the complaints are coming not from them, but they are complaints manufactured on their behalf."

—The first Minister of Munitions.

My telephone bell is not particularly melodious, and it was getting so near dinner-time that I knew I should be late again. But there is something about a telephone bell that is hard to resist. One never knows what important message it may herald—even at 7-45 p.m., for it is curious how completely office hours have disappeared. All the same, I wasn't pleased to hear it: it might be a Labour Exchange, or a Trade Union, or it might be a Government official, or an employer wanting women workers—but I didn't feel I wanted to deal with any of these things at that time of night. I took off the receiver with a suppressed groan, and this is what I heard.

"Is that the Women's Suffrage Society?"

"Yes," I said.

"I want you to help me, please."

In spite of something very urgent in her voice I hardened my heart, and replied that the office had been shut for some hours.

"Oh, please," she said, "you must help me, for I don't know what to do, and the Suffrage Societies always do help women, don't they?"

I couldn't resist this, so I asked her who she was and what sort of difficulty she had.

"I'm Mrs. X——," she answered, "working at Dash's factory in South London, and I'm doing fitters' work; I've taken the place of a Belgian man who went back to the Army in January. I trained in the workshop at Chelsea, and started work at £1 a week, with a promise of a rise to men's piece-work rates in a month. I've been there ten weeks last Monday; I was tired of waiting for my rise, but I did get on to piece-work rates then. I'm a good worker, and quick, and my earnings this week were £3 4s. 8d., so you can imagine I was glad, because it's not easy living on £1."

While she spoke I remembered her case—a widow with no children, whose "circumstances" had been "reduced" by the war, a woman of about thirty-five, who had taken to metal- turning and fitting as if she had been born a mechanic, as indeed perhaps she was.

"They paid me this evening," she went on—that was why she rang up so late, of course—"and the manager said I was to go back to time rates of £1 a week for the future, because I was earning too much.

"Yes," she agreed, after I had interjected a few rather forcible remarks, "of course it is. But when I asked him why? he said the men in the shop wouldn't stand it, and had protested, and that he wasn't going to lose his skilled men because of one partly skilled woman. He said it was a mistake putting women on piece. He'd not do it with any of the others. £1 a week was what the Ministry of Munitions had said, and if I wasn't satisfied with that I could leave it, for all he cared. And I want you to tell me what I'm to do."

The case seemed so clear and obvious that I thought it would be easily put right. Didn't Circular L2 say that women doing skilled men's jobs should be paid the skilled men's rates? There could be no trouble over that.

"Go back to work," I said, "so as to be there to give evidence. Send me a signed statement of all this, with dates and particulars of the work you do, and of the work the men do, and the rates for both, and I'll go to the proper Government Department on Monday. The Ministry of Munitions say. . . ."

In those days I was still optimistic, and I comforted Mrs. X.

* * * * * *

On Monday morning early I was at the big new Government buildings. It is astonishingly hard to find out who is the proper official for any one piece of business, but, when found, access to him is quite surprisingly easy, and so, after disturbing some ten or twenty young gentlemen, and making my way through a swarm of girl clerks, and climbing six different sets of steep stairs, and going down three lifts, I found myself in Mr. M—— or N——'s sanctum, and sitting on the right chair.

Mr. M—— or N—— is a young lecturer from one of our Universities. His subject may have been ancient or Oriental or modern languages, and, for all I know, he may have been very brilliant. I don't wish to disparage

his attainments; but I soon became aware that I knew a good deal more about engineering and economics and wages than he did, though I don't set out to be an expert myself. We exchanged a number of preliminary remarks, and I told him my business. He wrote it down assiduously in a handwriting of astonishing neatness.

"Of course," he said, "we'll investigate this case, and, if it's as you say, we must naturally make some rearrangement."

He seemed a little reluctant, and "some rearrangement" wasn't as explicit as I could have wished, and a momentary suspicion came over me. But I drove it away. Hadn't the Ministry of Munitions said . . . . ?

All the same, I drew Mr. M—— or N—— back into general conversation, just to see whether there was anything I could discover. In a few minutes he was telling me his views of women in industry.

"Dilution and all that," he began, "very necessary, no doubt, but engineering's not suitable work for women."

His tone was infinitely patronising, so I said a few things as gently as I could.

"Oh yes, of course, of course," he answered, "very clever with their fingers, no doubt. But it's not women's work, you know, their place is the home."

I didn't take up that challenge. After a few years of Suffrage work there are some things one has said too often to be able to say again, and no doubt Mr. M—— or N—— thought (for a moment) that he had converted me.

"And then these wages," he went on, "what do women want with such preposterous wages? £3 and £5 a week they get sometimes: it's perfectly out of the question.

I was frankly amazed, and I think my face showed it. He got a little pink in the cheeks, and repeated his point.

"Preposterous, perfectly preposterous; 36s. a week is as much as **any** woman ought to be able to earn, and quite enough, too."

I **tried** to keep quiet, and "behave like a lady," and I only asked him whether it was true that he was one of the men responsible for carrying out the Munitions Act, but it seemed to make him angry. His pink cheeks became red, and he explained to me, in rather a bored voice, but with great emphasis, that the statements about equal pay for equal work were only meant as a safeguard to the men's rates, and not in any way intended to raise women's rates of pay, and that, of course, in cases where their work didn't compete with men's, other rates were needed.

I expect my face was as red as his; but I was still trying to behave well, so I asked him if he thought it was quite fair that employers should take advantage of the disorganisation and helplessness and patriotism of the new women workers to make undue profits out of them.

"They don't make undue profits," he said, and he was as angry as I was, "and let me tell you this. Since the passing of the War Profits tax it's the State that gets any profits there are, and it's in the direct interest of the Government that employers should get labour as cheaply as possible."

I rose to my feet at that, and what I said I can't now remember. It was a good deal too emphatic to be ladylike, and Mr. M—— or N—— didn't enjoy it. I nearly fell down the lifts and staircase on my way out, because I was in a great rage, and one doesn't see very clearly at such time.

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As was to be expected, Mr. M—— or N——'s "investigations" led him to

the conclusion that £1 a week was the right rate for Mrs. X—— and the other women fitters at Dash's. I don't think Messrs. Dash were surprised when all their women left them: they did not refuse leaving certificates, and we at once got the women other fitters' work elsewhere at the men's piece-work rates. Mrs. X—— is now earning her £3 odd, and Messrs. Dash are turning out thoroughly bad work with their £1 fitters. But Mr. M—— or N—— still sits in his office chair, drawing, I suppose, £700 a year.

The Ministry of Munitions still say . . . , but I've learnt a great deal since they began to say it, and one of the things is that, no matter what Government Departments say,

Women have got to have the Power to protect Themselves.

They've got to organise, and they've got to vote, and nothing is much use till they do.

And my telephone bell goes on ringing, at all hours of the night and day.

R.S.

REPORT OF THE EMPLOYERS' PARLIAMENTARY COUNCIL.

It is somewhat strange to have to begin fighting the battle of the Factory Acts again, considering that legislative measures for the regulation of hours and conditions of work, after being bitterly opposed in the first half of the nineteenth century, have gradually come to be recognised as necessary and beneficial and have won general approval. It is true that some of the regulations of the Factory Act (by no means all) have been suspended for the duration of the war, in order to cope with the tremendous pressure created by the need for war material and the absence of some millions of male workers, but even as an emergency measure the suspension is known to have been by no means an unqualified success, and in many cases it has been found that working unlimited hours was unfavourable to the output, which increased when the working day was shortened.

This experience appears, however, to be unknown to the Employers' Parliamentary Council, a report of which has just reached us. The whole question of "Freedom of Private Enterprise" is reviewed in this report without reference to history and known facts. This remarkable document (after hinting that the Government pledge to the trade unions should be repudiated and explicitly demanding that the Trade Disputes Act should be repealed) goes on to recommend in no uncertain terms that the Factory Acts should be repealed. "For a quarter of a century every Session of Parliament has witnessed the passing of Acts meddling and interfering in countless directions with the management and conduct of nearly all the trades and industries in the Kingdom, limiting the capacity and impairing the efficiency of labour, restricting the freedom of capital, checking industrial development, hampering individual effort and adding enormously to the cost of production." At the outbreak of war these enactments were "impatiently brushed aside" and "there must be no return to the past in this, any more than in other connexions." No allusion is made to any difference between the labour of men and women, or between children, young girls and lads, and adult persons; the Employers' Parliamentary Council appear to aim at complete freedom to exploit the labour of either sex or any age, as in the "good old days" of a century ago.

The fact that strikes one about this proposal is the insularity of mind that it implies. Surely the E.P.C. must be aware that factory legislation is not an institution peculiar to Great Britain. Similar measures have been adopted in almost all European countries, by almost all our Allies, including Japan (which passed its first Factory Act in March, 1911), and by most of our Colonies, some of which have a more stringent system and administration than our own. In the future we shall be less isolated than in the past: we shall certainly be entering into various commercial arrangements with our Allies and Colonies after the war. Even supposing for the sake of argument that the revolutionary aims of the E.P.C. were to be approved by Parliament, how could the representatives of our Government confront the representatives of these other Governments in drawing up a treaty of commerce after the war, and inform them that we propose to withdraw all protection from the woman worker, the child, the youthful worker, and that we propose to become once more the happy hunting-ground of the sweater and the bad employer?

Another consideration ignored by this memorandum is that a large number of employers, so far from being opposed to factory legislation, are in favour of it. The whole history of the industrial revolution shews that the great industry of modern times, industry run with large capital, elaborate machinery, and large numbers of workers of both sexes and most ages collected together in one building, creates an urgent need for some orderly rule and regulation in the interests of the common weal. The community cannot suffer the life and energy of its immature citizens to be used up by work in unhealthy conditions and for unlimited hours; that is to say, it cannot suffer these practices to be pushed to the point they would be under unregulated competition, and fortunately there are many employers who recognise that efficient working is promoted by the regulations of the Factory Act.

AGNES KELLEY.

Maternity and Child Welfare.—A Monthly Journal for Workers among Mothers and Children. (John Bale, Sons and Danielson Ltd., London, Sixpence net).

This new journal proposes to give publicity in its pages to all matters that concern medical and social welfare of the mother and the young child. It is hoped that it will be of use to the midwife, the health visitor, and the district nurse, as well as to the increasingly large body of voluntary workers who are devoting their energies to infant welfare work. The editors desire to present practical and scientific information in a simple form, and the names of Dr. Mary Scharlieb, Lady Barrett, Dr. Amand Routh, and the Medical Officer of Health for Birmingham,—among the many expert contributors to the first number,—leave no doubt as to the high standard aimed at by the Editorial Board. The fact that this Board, under medical supervision, includes a Health Visitor and a representative of Midwives further enhances the journal's usefulness. Special articles on Maternity and Mothercraft are followed by reviews and notes on topical subjects, which should all serve to keep workers in touch with the varied aspects and activities of maternal and child welfare work.

AGNES KELLEY.